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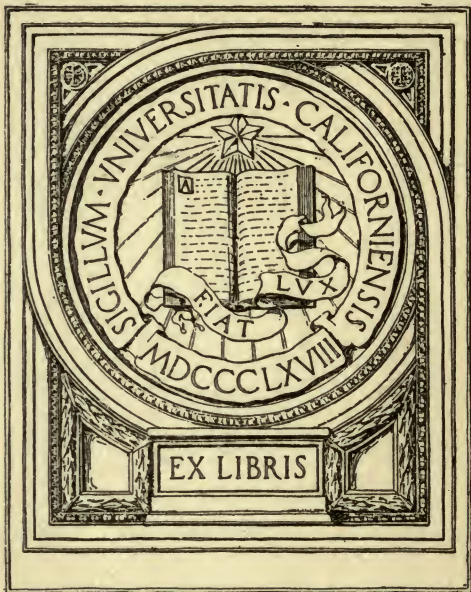
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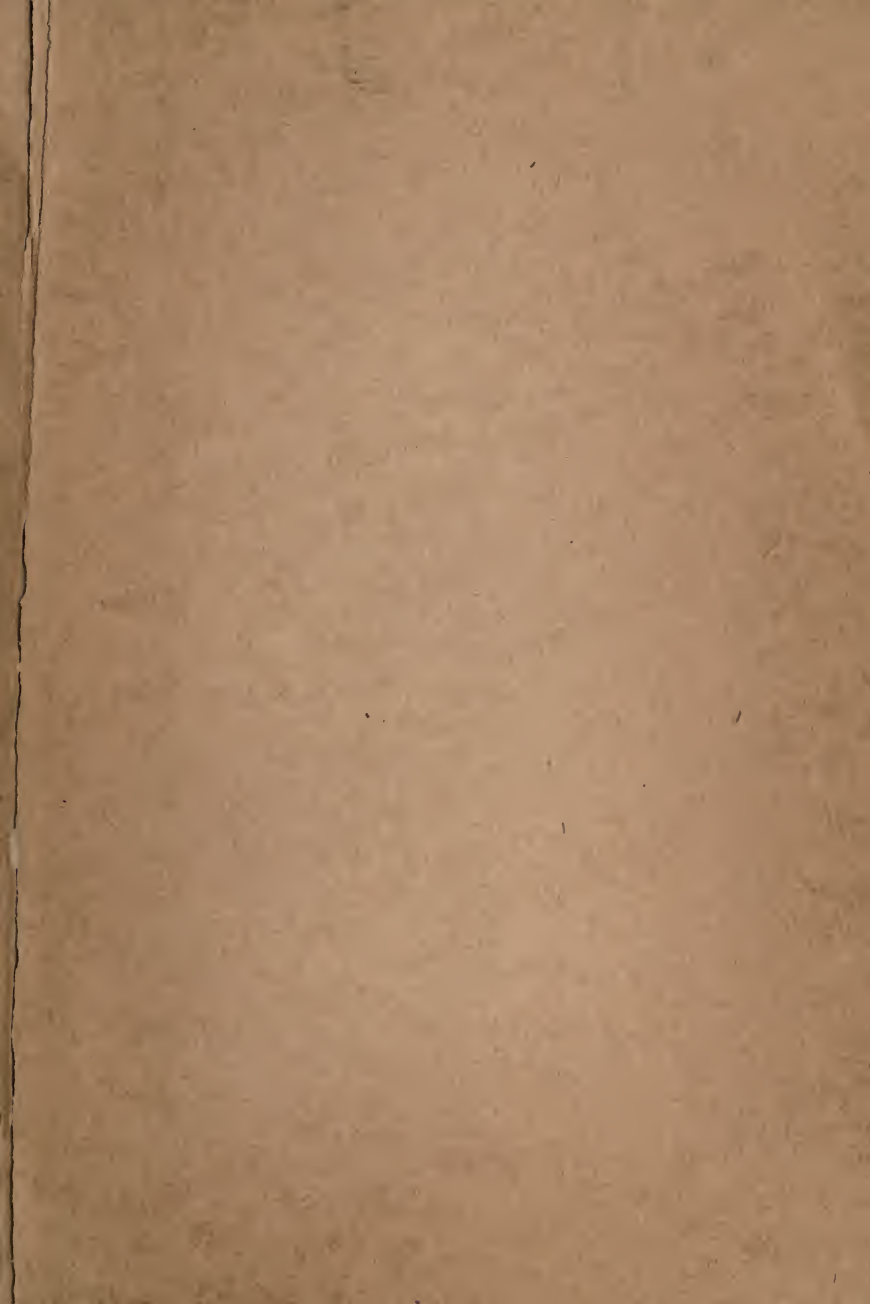
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"ADVENTURERS ALL" SERIES.
No. XXVI.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



CAMELOT

Adventurers All.

A SERIES OF YOUNG POETS
UNKNOWN
TO FAME.

(B)



Come my friends.....'Tis not too late to seek a
newer world. It may be that the gulfs will wash
us down It may be we shall touch the happy isles
Yet our purpose holds...to sail beyond the sunset.

Ulysses



CAMELOT

BY

BENJ. GILBERT BROOKS



OXFORD

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1919

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CAMELOT.

DANK fogs and foul mists from the poisoned deep
Thickened above strange pools, aglimmer
With shapeless white moons elf-dismembered, dimmer
Than snakes that through the sombre brushwood creep.
Where grey breaths mingled in slow dance
Men's faces flashed in one fierce glance.
The cold bleak fury of the sudden lance
Tore them like paper masks : so white
They vanished in the night.
A mad wind hurried from the east
Whirling afar the cloudgates fleeced.
The chill grey dawn spread out behind.
From clarion wild and throbbing tremulous drum
Went up a cry of Arthur come.
Proud, with proud princely lips, he rode
Where the dim-wreathèd vapours flowed.
Between the banners green and gold
Were calm bluff face and silent eyes
And thick lank hair driven red along the wind.

TO THE
ANNALS OF
CAMELOT

A thousand knights and spearmen bold
About their monarch tramped and wheeled.
The tangled lance, like bristles in black field,
Pierced the grey torment of the storm-swept skies.

O'er Camelot Town by trumpet sound
A white sun burnt like burnished brass,
And bronze-cheeked horsemen turban-crowned
O'er-swarmed the plain, and swept around
Speared thick as bladed grass.
A Queen they brought to Arthur's hand
To spare the wasting of their land.
Lo! stately amid white foaming ostrich plumes
Went ponderous elephants vermilion-dyed,
Pricked on by shrill calls from their oiled black grooms.
Then, in a golden tower's mauve-curtained pride,
Moved forth dark Guenivere to meet the King.
Her monster, by his Nubian driver reined,
Being knelt, two mutes drew back the tasselled string,
And opened to the wind's warm dallying:
Soft sensual carven face like ivory, stained
A warm tea-brown, rich carmine-painted cheeks,
Fading in smooth green where the shadow-streaks
Enfolded bulbous curves of purple lips,

CAMELOT

And lustrous eyes like lacquered almond-slips
Set in a fringe of fine jet lashes, aglow
With dusky splendour. Whereupon right low
The King, ruthless no more, bent him in greeting,
While sombre horns and wailing kettledrums beating
Noised o'er the ground bass shouts of Arthur's men
A strange barbaric hum. Among the crowd
Great Launcelot (long, horse-cheeked, and swarthy-browed,
His black hair ringed with red gold) paused, drew rein,
Tamed the proud hoofs and turning in the way,
Towards Camelot's ivory gates, led back the wide array.

Through the lone temple courts boomed the loud gongs,
Harrying down dim ways (as winds that o'er
Grey flagstones drive the yellow beech-leaf throngs)
Quaint-motioned priests in mystic vestiture,
To where stood clumped, the innermost shrine before,
A phalanxed heap of knights, chanting response
To low crooned songs, like the myriad moan of gnats.
And ever anon as the bell of beaten bronze
Clanged out, the great round golden priestly hats
Swayed slowly forward to the crimson mats.
Forth leapt the Dusky Queen 'mid the host of them gathered.
Dancing she whirled her round, mocked with keen cries

CAMELOT

Their muttered charms, their hierarch saffron-feathered,
Their great bronze mask. Forthwith the burning eyes
Of Galahad took the challenge. Gawaine the wise
Blazed up beside the throne in sudden wrath:
Whom Arthur with a look made pause. Ghost pale
Grew all men. Lo! on the wind, a fiery path
Trode by three flaming spirits. Rathe
Bore they against the King the Holy Grail:
Then fled. And where the sacred veil
Had hung behind the altar, a strange land lay
Beckoning men's inquisition. Unamazed,
Eager to cleanse their fane, three knights sprang up,
Pledged hilted swords to quest that cup,
Spurred steed and went forth on their threefold trail.
Then turned the King where Modred the prince, wry-faced,
Hugging his dreamed ideals, drew hood and gazed.

Sir Launcelot's soul moved in some Eastern world
O'er whose buff cliffs, trees cone-trunked, preened
Dark purplish bulks. Long trailing spray-lines greened,
Beaded with pink blooms, fell from willows gnarled,
Across a crimson mauve-flecked stream.
The tawny round sun, half adream
With nard, twixt violet poplars dropped its beam

CAMELOT

On thick lush grass, whence rose a white
Slim naked girl, alight
With lemon, limmed with pink, who shed
Rich orange hair from her proud head.
But where he rode was dry curst ground.
Grey-bellied clouds went wallowing on all day.
No living thing he met, but lay
Ever brown dung on fields as bare
As chiselled copper, hedged in square
By straggling brushwoods, spiked with trees,
Not blighted like the roadway's stumps,
But crookt like crazy chimneys sweep's-broom crowned.
Dusk brought a rattling hail. His knees
Shook, and his bleeding face, ice-bit,
Fled screaming through the raw mad wind that split
His whole beer-coloured world to clod-like lumps.

A low moon filled the violet sky :
So red and pale it hung at dawn
It made the tall grass wave mast-high :
But when Sir Galahad spurred by
The red round moon was gone.
Beyond the slimy dust-green ford
An angel with a flaming sword

CAMELOT

Smote him so that his hair lay flaxen-white
Across translucent brows. His twin blue eyes
Burnt like dark beads in that unearthly light.
Thence sprung an elvish world, where he saw rise
'Mid cloudy phantom-whorls, vast forms that strode
All dumbly through the gloom, till spectral foes
Entangling, slew them. Æons he abode
To learn the truth thereof. Far other rode
Gawaine (clipped black moustache, short parrot nose,
Brown mobile eyes and solid massive throat
Raised to a delicate chin) whose linked-mail coat
Bore brawny chest, and quick short sturdy limbs.
Gaily he went: snuffed the horizon's rims
Day in, day out. Sometimes great shouldering downs
Thrust broad half-tilted fields up, o'er whose crowns
Dense woodland sprawled, here green, here ochre, umbered
With sun. Thence flowed wide shades of blue. Lo! slumbered
Maroon-tiled cots, dark elms splashed on buff lanes!
Or again, between faint cloud-whifts, quivered blown
Bright brick-red trees, long, slim, and forward thrown
Lagging their branches, as a lady trains
Plumed fans in hastening. Last o'er Camelot black,
The blood-red sun flared out like a torch flame puffed back.

Silently through the open gates he passed.
The dark night eddied round him : only here
And there a glimmering flicker of lamplight cast
Pale yellow rays on tier by climbing tier
Of dim arcades and palaces built sheer
Against the stars. An unshaped monstrous dread
Stalked through his mind as he through that lone town.
Beside a green drawn blind with covered head
A figure moved, and stopped him. Looking down
He knew the Queen's face in that mask of brown,
With red dulled eyes weeping most piteously.
"Art thou come back," she cried, "Gawaine my Lord?
The King is in dire need. Ai, woe is me,
Such weird I drew upon him. Mark the abhorred
But now slew Isolde as we sat at cards
And taunted me with Launcelot's lust, that howls
Nightlong amid the streets with riotous pards
Stark mad, and dog-like rends the guards
Sent out to apprehend him. Modred prowls
With Mark among the filthy cowls
O' the lewd folk. One seeks friends, the other prey—
Tristram that loved the White Queen ; even as I
Of old yon Launcelot, ere the doltish King"—
Hot Gawaine rose upon her blabbering.

CAMELOT 🐉

“Thou gilded sow, wouldst thou the Throne befoul
With this vile ordure?” Towered his mace on high
And smashed her skull out like a poisoned fly.

A gust of wind drove on and shook the door
Wide open. Leaping red lights flung
Quick shapes on broken plaster walls, that bore
White guttered candles in wire sockets hung.
Gawaine beheld brute-faces bunched
Fierce-eyed, while two breathed wrestlers crunched
Hard sand with bare feet. One vast torso hunched,
Thick knotted red limbs tightly drawn,
Swayed like a hairy fawn
O'er his swart foe, who (with smooth skin
Dull ivory colour) wriggled in
And on a sudden thrust his knife
Sharp in his breast. The mighty Tristram fell
Ox-like to earth. They turned pell-mell
In flight, the babbling bousy crew.
King Mark, with purring eyes of blue
And earth-brown hair, slipped on his cloak
And went. But Gawaine seeing the place
Clear, one red moment sensed the coming strife.
That Mark or Modred from the Great King's yoke

CAMELOT

Should think to purge the realm, made reel
His scorn. Therewith a dark shape clutched him. Steel
Flashed in his thigh. Moonwhite blazed Launcelot's face.

By massive columns ivory-ferned
Where clouds of floating perfume hung,
Rare spice o'er scented wines rich-urned
A thousand golden braziers burned,
While exquisitely rung
Strange liquid notes from mellow flutes
Played faintly for the miming mutes.
'Mid stools of sandal-wood in dim lit ring
White slaves and tawny silken cats stretched prone
O'er gorgeous Persian stuffs, where the Ancient King
Lay dreaming on his splendid sombre throne.
Along the ebon stairs, gold traceries
Wrought delicately. Whereby, quaintly garbed,
Three crooked dwarfs strove still to draw his eyes,
With ape-like mocks and garrulous mimicries,
By peacocks, under twisted bill-blades barbed.
A sudden cry broke out. The smart quick tread
Of hurrying men was heard. Lo! At their head
Modred the Prince with fifty torchbearers
Paced up before the King: spoke out with terse

CAMELOT 🐾

Brief words the Kingdom's wrongs, since lust was now
Sole law. There stood he passionate, neck bent low,
Tense white face thrust against the King's, in cold
Contempt of all his doing. Arthur's hold
Stiffened upon his sword. "The Night goes ill,"
He cried, "When the bright moons flee!" And straightway, doffed
His plumed effeminacy, he towered aloft
Shouting his challenge through the great hall, until
Blow after fierce blow beat him to the ground . . .
When the red flames were dimmed, rank mist swirled all around.

April, 1917.

LONDON POEMS.

SPRING, THROUGH THE WINDOWS.

A CROSS two windows of our Lecture Room,
The facade of the University,
A neo-classic thing,
Passed soot-stained, bleak and passionless.

Winter had overworked it with her web,
Softening it to shadows of moist grey,
White with the morning mist
And mellow with the evening rain.

Tracing a dainty pattern was a tree,
Slender with many interlacing branches,
Leafless and desolate,
Shaking a little in the wind.

There came a day the sky was no more dun
But a clear green with little yellow clouds ;
And I cried out at it
So that my comrades thought me mad,

Because the ivory walls, picked out with gold,
The tree, the shadows cut in ebony,
Keen as sharp steel stood out
Like naked athletes in a troop,

Who, for their joy, went leaping in the sun,
Stamping and laughing, dancing and shouting there—
And coiling round their feet
The rippling flood-tides of the Spring.

WHITE FLAME.

A LONG low line of houses spread
Yellow against the field's bright green :
Their jet-black slates were fringed with red

And purple shadows ran between,
Speckling the clustered chimney-pots
That flamed vermilion, rising clean

Up to the blue-grey sky in knots :
The sun shone forward steadily
And gave the patterned colour-plots

The crude and sharp monotony
That symbols have : then, in the same
Instant of vision, seemed to me,

Out through the deep sky dancing came
Shooting in zigzags ere it fled,
A small white bird, a glint of flame.

MENACE.

THE street was chalk-white like the dead ;
The houses, black and stencilled shapes,
Entangled down the distance fled :
The trees, limned with a livid light,
Cold in the menace of the night,
Reached forth their arms like carven apes.

The full moon reigned, spreading a net
Of black over the woven cloud ;
And in the veil the stars were set
Two by two in its tracery ;
Snared they were from that great grim sea
Whence the last drifts of vapour flowed.

I AND A FRIEND.

ROAD after endless road
(Pale grey hedged in with folds of black)
Beneath a sky like some great sack
Scratched with white points, we strode.

Moving over the ground
There sprawled the shadows hard and thick
Of my swift feet and long lean stick—
We knew no other sound.

You seemed so very young,
Your white face quick in the lamp's gleams ;
You babbled to me of your dreams—
But O my soul was hung

With a long black velvet thought
That broke like death across your pale
Grey monotone of talk—so frail,
So wonderful, yet naught

To-night. My dream is done ;
Where you see loveliness is just grey mud ;
This woman's scorn has turned my blood . . .
O, how you babbled on.

WINTER MORNING.

A YELLOW candle flares ;
It sends strange shadows, flinging unawares
Swift blackness at the walls.
Across their ruddy dimness falls
Its web of golden light ;
Above there glows the sombre ceiling white.

The curtains of dark green
Are moved away. The world lies dead. Between
The gleaming white roofs, wet
And polished with the rain, are set
Six chimneys black and squat :
Far out the sky's all grey. It moveth not.

A woman rakes the fire . . .
My soul laughs with a tremulous desire
To feel the wind in my hair ;
Yea, on some lonely hillside bare,
To breathe, with all their pain,
The cold moist kisses of the clinging rain.

CHILDREN PLAYING.

BLACK with fear I tramp
While the lamp
Trails its radiance down the night
Marking on the pavement grey,
Where the silent children play,
Wide green circles of pale light.

In the glare they stand
Hand in hand :
Spirits grey that cringe at me
Through their loathsome flabs of skin,
And their eyes like dreams of sin
Goggle upwards endlessly.

As I hurry by
They come nigh,
Clutching with their tenuous claws
At my cloak ; for they are old,
Very old, and evil-souled,
Playing with their dust and straws.

WHITECHAPEL ROAD.

GREEN-PANELLED shutters in a glare
Of burning sunlight, pushed aside
Just where the shop-door lets one see
An old man in a black skull cap
Dark-clad and sitting silently
With thin hands cross-wise in his lap.
Two crinkled eyes droop on the place
From out his carven boxwood face.
No solid world is his ; but a shrine
Of forms and shapes in pure design.
No human body passes there
For him ; only the manifold
Intense blue shadows shoot and glide
Over still pavements washed in gold.

IN BLOOMSBURY.

THROUGH the bright airy room, came cool
Clean sunlight, and the afternoon
Bathing its sober mellow tone
With sharp clear radiance, like a pool
Where delicate gold-fish glide, and where
Pale weeds and red-streaked pebbles lie
And all the hues of moss-grey stone,
Wavelessly, imperturbedly,
Beneath the golden sway of the moon.

And while I sat, still sipping in
This filtered freshness of the air,
I heard a barrel-organ tinkle
Tinnily with a tune so thin
It seemed as if my being were
A crystal phial, with a moonish sprite
Beating an odd fantastic measure
Against my outer shell.

And there
Sidelong through the windows wide
I saw upon the roadway stand

IN BLOOMSBURY

Churning the handle, twinkle-eyed,
A wee Italian woman, with tanned
Dim terra-cotta face—each wrinkle
Marked with cringing, sagged with greed,
Black glossy hair, and tassel of jet
Kerchiefed in embroidered silk,
A fat arm propped against her hip . . .

And wandering into my drowsy mood
Came grin and smirk from her faded lip,
Creeping into the liquid light
(Wavelessly, imperturbedly)
To beat an odd fantastic measure
Among pale weeds and red-streaked pebbles
Beneath the golden sway of the moon.

A SONG.

DOWN violet sky the pink clouds tack ;
The sunset wind comes sweeping through ;
It limns white paving stones with black
And on the mud it strews flaked blue.

One shop's aglow with lemon yellow
Where cheap gold trinkets blaze and spark ;
The Town Hall, spired fantastic fellow,
Rises in tawny tumult dark :

Clipped trees block out most crude designs
Like bits of twisted chimney-pot ;
How bright the new Bank's white wall shines,
Our London Town's grown Camelot !

REGENT'S PARK.

(OUTER CIRCLE.)

A TAWNY patch of sun, dim cloudlands smeared and grey ;
And round the track-way round the Park a dirty cream
wall goes ;

White gulls upon dank grass, crushed in the sodden clay,
And trees that trail through yellow mist their long thin streamery-
boughs.

I glance from the wet pavement beyond the tree-top ends
To where great soiled white mansions perch, flecked grey with
fog-spawned scums.

Unseen, upon the terrace, a motor jerks—then bends
Off in a rising wailing roll of melodious kettle-drums.

SNOW, COME AND GONE.

SNOW, come and gone, wets the wide street slate-grey.
Hedged with low buildings is it, and dark closed shops,
Whose tops white sleet and black roof chisel out
In formal shapes. The slim trees branch forth prongs
And fasten steel claws in the cloud-wrack's womb,
Low-lying (fiercely-kneaded, dim) to East.
The tram wires swing a tiny orange light
I' the dusk. Thence spreads a clean white vapour up—
How shapely-edged! To where (so calm, so sweet)
Comes the clear, cool, pure, pellucid, ultimate Blue.

SUCH DAINTY CLOUDLANDS.

SUCH dainty cloudlands lie
Above those wires that thread
Converge and cross o'erhead
Between the poles . . . a sky

As soft as pearl-white stone
Just tinged with palest green.
Fine skeins of silk between
Sunset and dusk are blown.

Passing, some tractor lifts
Out of its funnelled cup
Thin smoke that travels up
Till all's illumed to drifts

Of low-toned amber light :
So moods transpose mere sight.

BRITISH MUSEUM.

I^N this vast-pillared portico
Just watch the bars of sunlight flow
Across the granite slantwise . . . Dare
You dream? That courtly pigeon there
With ruffled plumes and fire-shot down
That seems to woo his lady fair
Is far too proud to swerve aside
When she he woos turns elsewhere.
But on he paces, tail spread wide,
Crimson of claw, red-agate eyed,
With just perhaps what Roman air
Some portly seigneur might have shown,
Puffed with quick struts, pompous with trailing gown,
On Capitolean business, bustling, bundling down.

TEA WITH BILLIE IN THE RESTAURANT

(DANSE NÈGRE.)

HERE'S naught for dreams. Electric beams
Paint shapely creams on linen and plate ;
And small blue china things, brimmed high
With amber, lie where slim spoons wait.
Now her spirit's cold frank sparkle falls
Over me, the light so makes these walls
Luminous, that mouldings on the frail
Golden mirror-frames grow honey-pale.
Soft laughters fill the room, and trill
Amid the dainty crack of cups ; when she—
With what surprise of black bright eyes !
Notes the sullen dance of fiddle minstrelsy.
The sad low drumming throbs so, coming
Jarring the humming wail of the tune,
Strange with fear the wild strings veer
Lilting a queer fantastic croon.
Gently rhythmic, to the mood she sways,
Body and head. Black shadows, tawny-greys,
Fleet like serpents in the iron-blue fur
Coiling loosely round the neck of her
Maroon-dull coat ; while all her throat
Curves white and smooth to where those charmèd eyes
That never wandered yet, have gone
Dreaming of glittering pools and dark dim forest cries.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION DINNER.

(UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GOWER STREET, LONDON.)

THERE has been wine and feasting. There's been mirth,
Gay murmur of chatter; and while I've revelled in
The cruel bored lips of that Italian, you
Have bid your wayward impulse flicker among
Fair silken-petalled roses. Gold and warmth,
Tall yellow candles with their burning lights
Have given us—brightness!

There's been silence made.

We have come out, since when we've said no word,
Into this crypt-like darkness, bowed stone walls
Being arched above us, whose grey angled forms
Make such dusk that we're blinded as we turn
Toward the Cloisters.

Sure, strange light seems there,
Thin, blue, and fluid round about the wide
Pale pillars, casting shadows on the floor,
Then dying in green glooms, where (look now!) there go

AFTER THE PRESENTATION DINNER

Grave-gestured, dim-robed spirits grouped. Ah never
Men, are those stately beings, branded each
With his sharp tongue of splendid colour, rich
Blue or royal scarlet, russet or garish yellow.
Aren't you afraid? They're grown so strange, immortal,
Leaving those candles for the light of day,
It seems a sort of death.

Come, we'll be left
Unless we hurry on and join them, madam.

January, 1915—May, 1918.

BLANK VERSE STUDIES.

THE OLD FIDDLER.

LUMINOUS hung the fallow saffron sky
Streaked with long heavy stains of drab grey-green
Like mildewed cheese.

In mute hostility the crude black mass
Of crazy roofs and chimneys splashed against
Its brightness; and beneath
There ran a vague dark purplish line of shops
Whose rose-pink lights from their deep windows threw
A reddening flush over the sombre crowd
In all its hazy twinings. And the puddles,
Spread out at hazard on the grey road, glistened
With gleams of shimmering silk. Out of the silence
There came the jerking intermittent drone,
Swelling and dying, of the towering trams
Swishing by monstrous in the gloom, lit up
With dim green flickering lamps.

Against the wall in a snuff-coloured cloak
Brooding over his creaking violin
The quaint old fiddler stood. His clipped white beard
Fringed like a silken fan his elfin face,
Ruddy and soft with delicate purple veins;
His bright blue eyes full of outlandish dreams.

HE OLD FIDDLER 🐣

Before him, thrown across a smoking cap
Of black embroidered silk, his music lay
Unheeded. And the scraping of his gut
Was like the scream of fingers on wet glass
So wild and tuneless. Yet he seemed to me
Striving to speak out something of the vision
In those vague eyes that gazed so piteously
Across the swift black writhing mass of people :
Only the power had left him.

All the mob saw
Was an old mad beggarman, cumbering the road.

HER SOUL.

ONE spoke to me last night. I rose and laid
My hand within His still enfolding grasp
And looking up at those great mournful eyes,
The bitter lips and swarthy dreaming face
I caught the movement of His mantle grey
As on He passed, shepherding me amid
The secret ways of the town, dimly patrolled
By night's wan sentinel, until at length
We entered under a dingy portal, known
Of none but the moon and the lonely wind that knocks
At all men's doors indifferently. And God
Murmured into my ear: "This dwelling place
Is the high mansion of her soul, wherein
Her soul holds night-long vigil." Straight He drew
The heavy purple hangings; bade me see.
And lo! Before mine eyes, a golden troop
Of splendid spirits roved in ecstasy,
Casting aloft their radiant brows, and fair
With deathless beauty, moving stately-wise
Their smooth white limbs in cadence of the dance,

HER SOUL ●

Jubilant all; while the perfumèd air
Throbbèd with delight, fillèd with the exquisite cry
Of glorious violins. Much I wonderèd who
And whence they were, till He replièd: "Each night
Back to the souls that gave them birth they throng,
The many dreams that wander in strange minds.
These are the dreams that she has given you."
Therewith He had me look another way
Where there was wrought upon a silken web
The mystic warfare of the dragon-brood
Against the dark-green serpent yellow-ringed
That coils round that same tree whose blossoms be
The seven-fold clusterèd stars. And as I watchèd
A motley winding crew of shadows rose,
Gibbering glibly like pale driven leaves
At the fall of the year, or writhing in and out
To the keen agony of shrill Phrygian flutes.
Chequered with black they were, and lurid red;
A long lean carnival of death—a vision
Seen by a madman with the night-voice tainted.
Then as I drew me back in doubt, He said:
"These are the dreams that others had of her."
Yet a third way He led me forth, until
We came into a region of abyss,

HER SOUL 🐾

Where silence broke like little silver waves
Against an everlasting loneliness.
No voice I heard ; no voice but my own thought
Turning uneasily about my brain :
And then there grew upon my consciousness
A new sound like the sound of dying wind,
The long low broken moan insufferable
Of a poor lost spirit whimpering in the night.
I could not speak for fear of my own words.
Slowly I turned again the way I came,
Slowly : and dumb : and God had gone from me.

THE STRANGERS.

THEY were strange men to see in our grey town,
Outlandish fellows, dreams, symbols belike.

After the wind's swift hurrying-forth, dim clouds
Formless as vast grey phantoms, trooped across
The vague wan heavens unceasingly : the road
Sank into shadow, and the fallen rain
Flashed white or ran in glittering silver streaks
From countless puddles. Thinly overhead
Bare trees hung blackened in the poisonous air.
Below the fence, edging the pavement, swept
The sickly greenish yellow stream a-bubble
With flakes of greasy foam, drifting against
Old soot-washed factory buildings, huddled there
In grey tumult of crooked shining roofs.
Far aloof in the distant sky there rose
The dim crane, slowly it moved towards us, frail
As threads of finest steel.

And then by chance
Musing I cast my eyes along the street
And in that moment, lo, through the great gloom
Two spirits passed in silence, and were gone.

There was no one who saw them save myself :
But the warm breath of them, the strange perfume

THE STRANGERS

Broke like a flame on the vision of my soul :
And as white swans that ride into a pool—
Their amber beaks fretted with stains of jet—
Slowly in wide rings stir the smooth brown water
And push long ripples to the ochre'd steps
By sun-red walls tricked out with mossy green ;
Even so these spirits moved the dreams in me ;
Dreams of a day of deep dark burning blue,
On a bright green hillside where the purple furze
Flamed with its yellow bloom, and the sapling birch
Waving like spears of ruddy bronze, was filled
With a faint green haze ; and far in the distance foamed
The brown wreathed woodland bare : while over all
From shy swift dawn into the sunset sweeping,
Like filmy banners adrift on the breath of the wind,
Hung silken flower-like clouds, splendid and pale
In the drowsy Spring of a warm luxurious world,
Where evening like a pale-robed acolyte
Moving among the stars, lit them each one,
Until they burned like burnished golden flames
Kindled beneath the purple dome of night . . .

And now the rain came pattering down again
Paltry and wet and cold and dismally grey :
And so the strange men passed out of the town.

THE CATS.

LONG clouds had driven the evening shadows out
Of the asphalt yard, dried grey with months of heat.
Up from the wooden box, tall sunflower stalks
(Green fountains) rose, whose large flamboyant blooms
Drooped, sepia-centred. By the stained brown fence
Paused a black velvet cat with spine arched high,
Frail head thrust down, dropping a long white nose
Quill-like twixt two broad cheeks. His eyes, wide-glowing
With luminous rich green fire, held all entranced
The foe, that, with pale delicate ginger fur,
Short, smooth, and tightly sleeked on a great fat body,
Sucked in the terror through his dim grey orbs,
And wary, stealthy, moved himself about,
Not daring look elsewhere, shaking his tail
In jerky spasms from the agony of the fear ;
Then lifting up his coarse thick whiskered snout
To fling a faint shrill wailing sort of howl
Into the gnat-swarmed air. No motion made
The rigid black ; only with those still eyes,
Waited, gripped hard. Then all at once there came

THE CATS ●

A long low mellow note of menace. Thrice
Beneath that dread pained treble, it arose,
Steady, insistent, cowing. Turning off
Along the asphalt with a nerveless limp
The pale beast crept away ; while velvet-black
Sinking upon his paws, as darkness fell
And the clouds blew out the sun, settled to sleep.

SOME WOMEN.

THIS is a poem of some women I know.
In case time should (as it might) brush from my mind
The memory of them, I have put them here
So as to fix the impression. First of all
There's Mildred. She's a swift splash of bright red
Upon a silver grey: a woman made
To head a troop of Cavaliers. Van Dyck
Would have sketched her with her short blunt hatchet-nose,
Firm chin, high-coloured cheeks and gallant eye,
Riding out by the trumpet sound of a dawn:
Not being Van Dyck, perforce I say no more.
Then Sybil too's a large round Greek-limbed woman
Pushing into the wind, or crouching back
In a chair, laughing and chattering by shrill spurts
To quivers of her quick globed shoulders, alive
With a revel of irony. Her mask-like face
Thrust forward seems a strongly-lined grotesque
From one of Aubrey Beardsley's drawings: or no,
One moment still, her grey eyes at repose,
Dim ivory skin, with dreamy flaxen hair
Hovering about her brows, and you almost think
Lord Leighton's women from the Ionian Isles

Had just that look. Winnie's more equable,
For as you follow the shadowy corn-brown tints
That tone her amber hair, she lets you lay
Your thinking out to sun, not speaking much
Herself, only responsively grimacing
A little at your jests, and laughing slyly
At the back of her mind, till with an exquisite "yes"
—The delicate deep vibration of some note
Drawn from a violoncello—you're led
Into the dusk of silence. Or, if chance
The rarer mood is on her, stands she forth
Staunchly opposing what you advance, with such
A half-assumed, half-comic petulance . . .
And Annie, with her sensuous foreign voice,
Who makes of her crisp fuzzy flaxen hair
A dim blonde cavern whence her eyes look forth
With sky-blue magic above the dark thick skin,
The bright red of her cheeks, how as she moves
One feels the subtle rhythms striking out,
The brood of dreams, and only shaping as yet
The lithe spring of her long voluptuous motion . . .
She's in New York watching the crisp June snow
Prick out frail Japanese patterns on red blooms ;
Or so I believe . . .

MILE END ROAD.

THE pavement's drab clay brown, slimy with wet,
And I look through the window of the 'bus
To see why we have stopped. Three little boys
(Two close and one apart) are watching how
The stiff-cloaked driver pokes about his tank.
They've on dark jerseys, and their breeches flap
Discoloured round their ankles, dangling loose
Like Turkish trousers. All three heads are bare,
Close-cropped, with black streaked fringes down the brows.
A fog-like yellowish grey, made soft with dirt,
Gives colour to their skin. Broad snouts they have
And thrust forth upper fangs between large lips.
Their eyes are dark and dead : and two faint shades
Sharply aslant are all their eyebrows show.
They do not move at first. And my thoughts drift
To tales of Neolithic men, who're found,
The learned say, in Eastern London, yet
Then one that's near the other (some great sack's
Hunched on his shoulder) points, at once, and jabbars.
His little sharp eyes set into a stare.

MILE END ROAD ●

He draws the other's ear against his mouth.
This second's witless ; and just gazes on
In dull stupidity. The third's quite still
With eyes toward the wheel: and so they stand,
Stuck in the pelting rain until we're gone,
These three strange creatures, Neoliths of Mind.

September, 1915—October, 1917.

POEMS (1918).

YARMOUTH.

AND has God walled this town
With non-corporeal hands?
All roads the spirit bands
Smite the Audacious down.

And cold wind-blades were hurled
(Round me the wild fowl flew)
When I strove to win through
And reach the Middle World.

The "dykes" lay carpeted
With smooth red sand methought.
But where that duck-weed wrought
Ill water-beetles bred.

Naught but willows afloat
Side by side on the road
Drooping with their own load,
For the tired eyes to note.

"The frogs move in the grass.
Shudder is come on me.
Let me turn back and see
The grey-freaked vessels pass.

"For God has walled this town
With non-corporeal hands.
All roads the spirit bands
Smite the Audacious down."

THE SCHOOL ORGANIST.

THE sun steals through the windows silently,
Over the silent heads of boys, the black round heads,
And silently,
For still against the long white keys she sits,
Lingers upon her ruddy gracious golden hair,
And lights her shapely neck, her bodice dim sea-green, her dark
So that these colours blend, [buff skirt,
Grey-green with silver pipes and lustreless,
Red with the auburn glow of newly polished wood :
And her sweet nasal music comes
Dreaming among the clear unbroken boyish tones,
Solemn and tremblingly amid
Their certitude.

I WAS so sad last night . . . The long long lines
Of this lone land were a wearying thing and its damp, deep
Rippled and broken slate grey there between, [green:
The stream made but a mock of the dun cloud's sweeping lines.

I was so sad last night . . . The hornèd cattle
Querulous grumbled through the dusk, and the waterfowl
Brake, drifting snow-white, flickering black, their howl
Yelling above that long dark string of lonely cattle.

I was so sad last night . . . Some strange bird sang
As if a boy with a penny whistle were trying to play . . .
Poor broken moon, and those long, long lines of grey!
There's no song known that could mean the song that that bird sang.

UNRESTING seas,
I've loved to watch you mould
In liquid marble shapes your crystal flood,
Striving to fit yourself with bold
Form and with strong-carv'n outlines. Who's not sighed
Noting how hard you've tried
To paint your surface azure when pale brown
Ran on your back, or how you've wrought, to fleece
With oily cloud-like swells
Your waves, what time that treacherous jackanapes,
The moon, held candle. O! I've sighed for this—
(Dreamers of dreams, unskilled)
Namely that down in the town
Your dream of form's fulfilled,
And in the sky where late the storm winds scud,
Your dream of colour dwells.

AUTUMN LAMENT.

I SEE no more the golden shells of leaves
Like sunset skiffs gliding amid the air.
The waste grows on me now. The broad sea's yellow floor
Moves not beneath the nets of cloud-strewn indigo,
But froths a little at my feet, and weeps.
And thence the tawny sands go far into the sky.

THEY will return, the men
Who come not living to appease the eye.
For all these tranquil evenings we have known
Since then, what can it mean, but that the earth
Grows glad with greeting as they rise each one
And stream up from the red-moist fields of France,
Un-noted, all concealed in golden autumn mist,
And seek their own dear land.

Such welcome have they from this earth, that holds
No consciousness of them :
But (that they fade not from the thoughts of men
Like sunlight from a pool)
We, whom they bantered, hated, strove with, loved,
We, who were judged unworthy of their high fellowship,
We come into their presence reverently,
With no sad pace as through the mansions of the dead,
But with our incense and our rich-wrought banners,
Giving them joyous praise, lighting the lamps
That, till this holy land shall crumble in the sea,
Never may man extinguish . . .

They return,
The men who come not living to the eye ;
They seek their own dear land.

PORTCHESTER AND PEWTY ISLAND.

(WIRELESS STATION.)

A MID thick trees there lie vast Roman walls
White flint with long thin tiles red-streaked. They gird
Nine acres. There's a strong old fort that sapped
Ten reigns of puissance, tucked against the North-
West corner, whence upmounts (Unbroken power,
Dark Ram of Strength) the foresquare Norman keep,
Pale grey through sapphire. Red Valerian bloods
Its solid flanks . . . And going along the road,
And seeing all this far off, one stops to watch
(Near the curved bank of chalk that holds the flood
From those moist fields) how, in the wide ebb'd bay,
Tinctured with salt sea-bloom, low sandy flats
Shoot out high metal lines, tall, threaded, slim,
With tensest webs of fragile clustered nets
Impending on the air . . . And one half smiles
To think that this new modern world should seem
(Being mightier than the old) so much more frail.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL.

(FROM THE "ANCHOR,")

PANELS black-edged, clean whitened walls,
Sweet peas, confectioned, frail and pink,
Long azure silken curtains,—all's
Most cool in sunlight.

Wide, the brink
Of tree-tops froths round carved grey stone,
Classic, with towers and buttress spurs.
Such fine austerity of tone! . . .

Back there, the Flying Officers
(You hear them laugh, great splendid brutes)
Crack jokes about some comrade's dung . . .

With what prim finesse each point shoots:
Frisled lace, 'mid pale blue brilliance hung.

BY BREYDON WATER.

I.

FROM dull grey mist, the lower sky
Ariseth salmon-pink against the sun,
Whose ball burns broad with autumn-ruddy glow.

As if white sleet had fall'n, and ruts
Had blacked the fields with shape, the mud lies bare
Far in the distance. Where the channels range
Flat-tinted skies
Are mirrored, and the sun a red-hot poker gleams.
Shimmers the mud against the concrete wall
And there half-buried lie
The long-trapped boats whose twin bleak skeletons,
Rotting to very ribs,
Stick out among the dark brown weeds, jet black.

A white mist rises on the marsh:
And on the far sweep of the distant wall,
Labouring slowly on,
A train lifts up its slant of bead-like vapouring.

The wild birds yapp and bark:—
Snow, scattered lightly on the darker strips.

BY BREYDON WATER

II.

Oft, where the dimming poles,
That mark the channel, bend away, there comes
A steam-driven craft,
That whisks behind it froths of yellow foam,
Just when the falling sun drips copper on the flats,
And as it passes near,
Prow high, and stern weighed down, touching the stream,
It breaks the silence, splits the red mock-sun,
Sends all the birds abroad and anon
Its wash sweeps into little bays and creeks,
And tiny breakers crash and tumble out,
And yellow mud comes clouding up.

The steam-driven craft
Goes on her way, and in a little while,
All has turned still again. And yet again,
There is no wind: mist's on the lower sky.

The big sun grows more like a half of red Dutch cheese.

July—November, 1918.

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